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ABSTRACT

This paper recognizes the need to educate children, especially immigrant pupils, and adults for life in a multiracial society, while making observations on a British select committee report on race relations and immigration. The paper accepts the committee's view that many of those born in Great Britain who belong to minority ethnic groups will experience difficulties which must receive special attention from the education service in that country; and also that others, too, including many children and adults of indigenous origin, have particular problems to which the education service must respond. The pattern for special help provided by the government is said to take care of all those suffering educational disadvantage, taking account of the distinct needs of different ethnic groups and of individuals, whatever their origin. The need for local authorities and schools to identify individual children who fall into this category is stressed. It is also noted that the success of government policies on education of the disadvantaged does not depend so much on the government as on the local education authorities, the teaching profession, and voluntary agencies. The latter part of the paper discusses specific recommendations of the select committee report such as that: (1) a good command of the English language should be a priority; (2) the strengthening of careers advisory services should be stressed; and (3) a survey of the various methods of dealing with the education of immigrant children in English should be conducted. (Author/AM)

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Educational Disadvantage And The Educational Needs Of Immigrants

OBSERVATIONS ON THE REPORT ON EDUCATION OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON RACE RELATIONS AND IMMIGRATION

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Science
by Command of Her Majesty
August 1974

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Educational Disadvantage and the Educational Needs of Immigrants

Observations on the Report on Education of the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration

1. The Government welcome the Report on Education by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration. They believe that the education service has important contributions to make both to the well-being of immigrant communities in this country and to the promotion of harmony between the different ethnic groups of which our society is now composed. This is because, first, the education service has some responsibility to assist citizens of all ages to develop their abilities to the full and, within that responsibility, a special obligation to children who for one reason or another are most at risk of not achieving their true potential: and second, education can be a potent instrument for increasing understanding and goodwill between the races. It would be wrong to suppose that education alone can achieve all the objectives on which society may set its sights, or that it can function unaffected by conditions in society at large. As the Select Committee point out, these must have an impact on the environment in which pupils, students and teachers work. Nevertheless, the Government believe that over the years the education service has achieved significant results, and at the same time they accept that much remains to be done to meet the needs of immigrants and their children. The Committee's Report contains valuable suggestions for action; these the Government have carefully considered from the standpoint of how they can promote the objectives indicated above. Among other measures, they have decided to set up within the Department of Education and Science a special unit to deal with the needs of all those suffering from educational disadvantage including the special needs of different ethnic groups (see paragraph 10 below).

2. The arrival in our society of people with a variety of social and cultural backgrounds has faced the education system with particular challenges. Many may wish to pursue the social objectives associated with their own culture as well as that of the host society. All, of whatever ethnic group, aspire to employment and levels of income commensurate with their abilities; but many enter the education system with sizeable handicaps. These are most pronounced for the new arrivals—children and adults—who are confronting for the first time an alien culture and have, additionally, inadequate command of the English language or indeed no knowledge of it at all. Lesser, but still serious, difficulties may face adults from some ethnic groups after many years in this country, who, although reasonably settled in a way of life here, had all or most of their education in their country of origin. The Government accept that members of the immigrant communities recently established in this country have specific educational needs arising from the fact of immigration and its continuing consequences—needs which may differ according to the country of origin. Some of the measures taken to meet them are described elsewhere in this Reply. There will be a continuing requirement for such measures for many years.

3. At the same time the likelihood is that arrivals of new immigrants into the United Kingdom, both adults and children, which have fallen in recent years, will not again rise to the levels of a few years ago and will eventually fall further. Thus an ever-increasing proportion of the children of immigrant descent entering

the schools will have been born in this country, many of them to parents settled here for many years or indeed themselves born here. It is true that some of these children may have been reared in the language and customs of the country of origin and may need the same sort of help as a newly arrived immigrant child. But, where immigrants and their descendants live in the older urban and industrial areas, the majority of their children are likely to share with the indigenous children of those areas the educational disadvantages associated with an impoverished environment. The Government believe that immigrant pupils will accordingly benefit increasingly from special help given to all those suffering from educational disadvantage. They accept the Select Committee's view that many of those born here, of all minority ethnic groups, will experience continuing difficulties, which must receive special attention from the education service. But others, including many children and adults of indigenous origin, also have particular problems to which the education service must respond; and in large, if not in complete, measure much the same effort and attention will be called for. The pattern of special help must thus provide for all those suffering educational disadvantage, taking account of the distinct needs of different ethnic groups and of individuals, whatever their origin.

4. The Government are thus concerned that children in this situation should receive the help that they need. This requires that they should be identified by those—in the main the local education authorities and the schools—who can give them this help. It is not, however, necessary for this purpose that individuals should be identified by means of national statistics. The Department of Education and Science formerly collected national statistics of immigrant pupils, based upon part only of the relevant population. These statistics were not, of course, the Government's only source of information on the education of immigrant pupils; there were also reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate and the findings of research commissioned by the Department of Education and Science, in particular the two reports published by the National Foundation for Educational Research, "Immigrant Pupils in England" and "Organisation in Multi-Racial Schools". But in themselves the statistics, as the Select Committee concluded, yielded very little information of educational value; the criteria were too unselective for the resulting figures to serve as a basis for Government policy, while local authorities, schools and teachers required their own more refined assessments of needs in order to take the various types and levels of decision within their responsibilities. As the Select Committee know, over a considerable period the Department of Education and Science devoted effort to exploring whether some other satisfactory basis of statistical return could be agreed, but these efforts did not succeed. In the Government's view the main reason for failure was that no general factual definition could answer such need as is felt within the education service for information about the educational needs of immigrants, and that a proper assessment of these needs through the mass collection of national statistics was not feasible. The previous Government therefore accepted the Select Committee's recommendation that the count of immigrant pupils in schools on this approach should be abandoned forthwith. As the next count fell due to be made in January 1974, the decision was made known last November in advance of this Reply.

5. Clearly new initiatives are required for the future. It is the local authorities and schools which need to identify individual children who are suffering from educational disadvantage. But the Government need a soundly based appraisal

of the extent of the problem. This appraisal could be based on a sample of the relevant population and the procedures used to make it should have no implications for the educational treatment of the individual pupils in the sample. This is an operation which both raises issues of principle and involves difficult technical problems. Initially, the Department of Education and Science will consult with the associations of teachers and local authorities on the objectives and methods involved. Thereafter it will be necessary to commission detailed study and investigation of the extent to which it is feasible to measure the attainment of boys and girls at school, and differences in that attainment between those suffering from social disadvantage, and others, and between immigrants and others.

6. The steps described in the previous paragraph will take some time to yield results. They should give the Government a better measure of the problems but will not in themselves suggest remedies. Meanwhile there is much that can be done to secure improvements in the education of immigrants and disadvantaged children generally, and there is every reason to do it. To a large extent this is a matter of the dissemination of existing good practice. It has always been part of the role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate to identify promising developments in this as in other fields and to advise local authorities and teachers on the introduction of such developments in new settings. Much of this, of course, relates to local situations but the Inspectorate has helped the Department to produce three pamphlets on the more general aspects of the education of immigrants; "The Education of Immigrants" and "Potential and Progress in a Second Culture" both published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1971, and "The Continuing Needs of Immigrants" published in 1972. In addition most local authorities employ inspectors or advisers and many of those with substantial immigrant populations have a specialist adviser on immigrant education. Teacher training, more especially in-service courses, also has an important part to play, as the Select Committee noted in their Report. The Government's views on these matters find expression in their later comments on the recommendations explicitly addressed to the question of teacher training, Nos. 9–13 below.

7. The Select Committee's Report rightly draws attention to the contribution of further and adult education to the educational needs of immigrants. But much more is being done by these services than the Committee were able to comment on in their Report. For instance, by March 1974, twenty further education establishments were offering preparatory courses mainly, but not exclusively, for immigrants with an inadequate knowledge of English and Arithmetic. These courses are arranged by the Department of Employment in conjunction with local education authorities and are intended for adults whose standard of literacy or numeracy is a bar to vocational training under the Training Opportunities Scheme, or to suitable employment. In addition there are part-time courses in English for unemployed immigrants, and some further education establishments are able to take account of the special language problems of some immigrant students in the wide range of GCE, vocational and non-vocational courses which they provide. There is also the contribution made by the Youth Service and similar provision for young people. Many immigrants participate in the facilities on offer. In recent years the Department of Education and Science has devoted a considerable proportion of its grants for experimental

work to action-research into the ways in which the Youth Service can assist with the integration of young immigrants and in which the Service can respond to their needs. Here too it appears that immigrants share many problems with other disadvantaged young people.

8. The above is not intended to be a comprehensive list of what is being done, nor would the Government claim that enough is already being provided. However, while they do not dissent from the Select Committee's view that in the immediate future local education authorities may have to give priority to improving their services for immigrant children, the Government believe that provision is also required for adults. Such provision will be for the sake of the adult immigrants themselves (to enhance their opportunities of self-fulfilment and of integration in our society), for society's sake (to assist racial harmony and enable immigrants to make their fullest contribution to national life), and for their children's sake (to increase the number of immigrant homes where English is spoken). The Government therefore welcome the initiatives that are already being taken by local education authorities and voluntary bodies in these fields and wish to encourage further developments. The Government will sponsor research into the educational needs of immigrant adults and into ways of meeting those needs. They will also encourage local education authorities in areas where there are immigrant communities to co-ordinate their work with that of the voluntary bodies so that adequate opportunities can become available for those who require them.

9. The Government attach importance to the advancement of harmony between the races in this country's multi-cultural and multi-racial society and believe that such harmony must be based on mutual understanding and respect. For the education service this implies that all pupils and students should be enabled to acquire a greater knowledge and appreciation of the cultural traditions of the countries of emigration as well as of this country, and to develop rational attitudes to race and colour. A condition for success in this aim is that the teachers should have had the opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge and skills through initial and in-service training. "Teacher Education for a Multi-Cultural Society" — the recently published Report of a Joint Working Party of the Community Relations Commission and the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education—will stimulate and inform discussion among all concerned with teacher education and training of how this may be better ensured for the future. The Government also welcome the initiative of the National Foundation for Educational Research, the National Union of Teachers and the National Association for Multi-Racial Education in proposing to the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations (which is grant-aided equally by the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities) a research project to develop curriculum materials on the theme of education for a multi-racial society. This project has already produced two preliminary reports surveying existing work. The Government acknowledge the work of the educational staff of the Community Relations Commission in promoting by a variety of means good race relations in educational establishments. Numerous voluntary bodies are engaged in similar work.

10. The Government believe that it is necessary to make more formal arrangements for the development of the work which is now being done on the education

of immigrants and education for a multi-racial society. But they also see a need to provide for all those suffering from educational disadvantage, and, consistently with the approach described in paragraph 3 above, they have decided that the arrangements which they create, while allowing for any distinct educational needs of different ethnic groups, should have this broader concern. The Government will therefore establish as a fully integrated part of the Department of Education and Science a unit to be called the Educational Disadvantage Unit. A statement of the terms of reference and principal tasks of this Unit is at Annex A.

11. The Government also believe that the local authorities, school teachers, and staff in further and adult education would welcome a source of information and advice on curriculum and teaching methods for the disadvantaged. This could be provided by the establishment of a centre which would draw together the results of research and development undertaken by other bodies such as the Schools Council and the National Foundation for Educational Research or sponsored by the Department of Education and Science, local education authorities and others, disseminate advice to teaching staff and encourage new developments in the schools and colleges. The centre would be independent of Government control, as is the tradition in matters affecting the curriculum. As the work of this centre develops, the Government will consider whether it would be expedient to link to it a number of regional centres to facilitate the task of dissemination. There might be scope for such regional centres to develop some amount of specialisation to take account of local needs.

12. These then are in the Government's view the general directions of advance for the education service. There will be new initiatives to identify educational disadvantage and to tackle the problems which it presents. The need to educate children and adults for life in a multi-racial society is recognised and the implications of this for the education service are accepted. There will be new machinery geared to improving the performance of the education service in tackling the needs of those suffering educational disadvantage, including the majority of immigrants. The success of these policies will depend in very great measure not on the Government itself but on the local education authorities, the teaching profession and voluntary bodies. In all this the Government will seek their close co-operation.

13. Subsequent paragraphs deal with various specific recommendations listed in paragraph 228 of the Select Committee's Report.

RECOMMENDATION (1)

"*Local education authorities should be in no doubt that facility in English is of crucial importance, not merely at the first stage of simple communication, but to a standard which will enable immigrant children to compete on equal terms with their contemporaries.*"

The Government accept that a good command of English is of crucial importance for immigrant, as for other, pupils. Advice and assistance to local education authorities have consistently reflected this principle.

RECOMMENDATION (2)

"*The Department of Education and Science should institute a survey of the various methods of dealing with the education in English of immigrant children, with a view to advising local education authorities on the best practice.*"

There is a need to distinguish here between teaching methods, i.e. the professional methods used by a teacher with an individual or class, and the organisational arrangements adopted by a school or local education authority.

At national level the Schools Council seeks to develop new methods and materials so as to widen the range of choice open to teachers. Its work on the education of immigrants and on race relations is described in Appendix 24 in Volume III of the Committee's Report. The Council has supported two major projects in language teaching for immigrants, one for non-English speakers and one for pupils from the West Indies. Both projects incorporated surveys and field trials.

In choosing what arrangements to employ for teaching English to immigrant pupils, the local authorities and schools need to take account of local circumstances (such as the degree of concentration of immigrants in the area and the time elapsed since their arrival) and of the particular needs of the pupils whom they have to educate (which will vary according to age, country of origin, home circumstances, and so on). In the Government's view, it would not be practicable to cover all the factors of this kind which would need to be studied in a single national survey, or to distil from such a survey a body of good practice for application throughout the country.

The Government do, however, support research into certain aspects of teaching English as a second language. A project on the "Educational Arrangements for Schools with Immigrant Pupils", undertaken at the National Foundation for Educational Research has been looking at language teaching in the context of a general survey of the education of immigrants, and some of its results have been published. Another project at the NFER has devised and published standardised tests of the proficiency in English of immigrant pupils. As a follow-up of the original project, these tests have been administered to a sample of children of varying educational experience.

Members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools advise authorities and teachers on arrangements and methods of tuition in English suited to their circumstances. In 1969–70 a special programme of inspections was drawn up to study an aspect of English teaching which seemed to need more attention: "second-phase" teaching for immigrant pupils who had had some initial instruction in English and had then been placed in secondary schools. Some conclusions from this programme were summarised in "The Continuing Needs of Immigrants" which followed on the general advice given in "The Education of Immigrants." There have also been a number of local surveys by Her Majesty's Inspectorate which have proved their value to the education authorities concerned. In drawing up its future programme of inspections, the Inspectorate will have regard to the desirability of devoting more time to the teaching of English to immigrants whether by inspection of schools with large numbers of immigrants or by surveys.

RECOMMENDATION (3)

"*Local education authorities to whom it is applicable should consider how best to approach, with tact and discretion, the convincing of West Indian parents that some of their children may need special English teaching, without implying that their children, because they lack standard English, are basically inferior*".

The Government trust that local education authorities will take note of this recommendation. In a circular letter on "Educational Arrangements for

Immigrant Children who may need Special Education" sent to Chief Education Officers on 1 November 1973, the Department of Education and Science drew attention to the fact that West Indian children as well as non-English speakers may have language difficulties. The letter also advised that, when teachers first began to think that a child might need special assistance, the matter should be discussed unhurriedly and sympathetically with the parents. The expansion of nursery education should increasingly make it possible for appropriate steps to be taken at an early stage of children's development.

RECOMMENDATION (4)

"*Local education authorities should seek to expand contacts between families and schools by all possible means, paid or voluntary*".

The importance, for all children, of strengthening the links between home and school is now widely recognised within the education service. As the Committee say, this must primarily be a matter for local initiatives tailored to the needs and opportunities which present themselves in the areas concerned. The maintenance of good relations makes heavy demands on staff time and voluntary help, often supplied by the parents themselves, can be of the greatest value. The Government have been able to support the efforts of the local authorities and voluntary interests in a number of ways. Following a recommendation in the Report of the Plowden Council "Children and their Primary Schools" (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967), the Department of Education and Science prepared a booklet containing examples of good practice in home and school relations, which was published as "Parent Teacher Relations in Primary Schools" (HMSO, 1968). More recently the report of the Educational Priority Area action-research project financed by the Department of Education and Science, the Scottish Education Department and Social Science Research Council ("Education Priority", Volume 1; HMSO, 1972) has suggested methods whereby parental interest and co-operation in education may be enlisted in socially disadvantaged areas. Some local education authorities have been able to undertake appropriate developments of their services from the resources ordinarily available to them. In Phase 9 of the Urban Programme the Government invited bids from local authorities for home-school projects and this met with a ready response. The invitation has been renewed in Phase 11. In the selection of such projects for approval under the Programme the Government will keep the claims of multi-racial areas very much in mind. In Circular 2/73, which gave guidance concerning the expansion of nursery education, the Department of Education and Science asked local education authorities to do everything possible to provide amenities to make it easier to welcome parents into schools and enable them to participate in their work. The Circular also recommended that authorities should provide opportunities in colleges of further education and elsewhere for parents to learn more about young children.

RECOMMENDATION (5)

"*The DES should seek to discover and evaluate what is being done by social/educational aid to alleviate the problems of urban deprivation, advise local education authorities of their findings and encourage them to follow the best practice*".

It will be among the tasks of the special unit in the Department of Education and Science and of the information and advice centre proposed in paragraphs 10

and 11 of the main part of this Reply to develop advice of this nature. Meanwhile DES is undertaking a limited follow-up of some of the projects approved under Phase 9 of the Urban Programme, and local education authorities will find many helpful suggestions in "Educational Priority, Volume 1.

RECOMMENDATION (6)

"*Careers advisory services should be strengthened*".

Under the Employment and Training Act 1973 local education authorities are required (from April 1974 in England and Wales and from May 1975 in Scotland) to provide a vocational guidance and employment service for pupils at school and for all students attending full-time and for certain students attending part-time courses of further education. These arrangements supersede the previous system whereby the Youth Employment Service was provided in most of the country by local education authorities but in some areas by the Department of Employment direct, and enlarge the responsibilities of the Service for students at further education establishments.

It is for the local education authorities to determine how many careers advisers to employ subject to the guidance of the Secretary of State for Employment. This guidance suggests that the needs of immigrant young people warrant special consideration and that extra staffing resources should be provided. It is open to local authorities to apply for assistance with the cost of such appointments under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966. The arrangements whereby careers officers are able to call on the help and support of the Department of Employment's race relations employment advisers in each region will continue.

The Survey of Careers Education in England and Wales recently issued by the Department of Education and Science is likely to prove an incentive to local education authorities and teaching staffs to give high priority to the process of educational and vocational guidance—an essential element in secondary education. In this context, the special needs of immigrant boys and girls will be a matter for joint concern on the part of teachers in school and the careers officers who work in partnership with them. The new emphasis on providing a service for students at further education establishments will help to increase and improve the already strong links between those establishments and industry to which the Committee refer in Recommendation 16.

RECOMMENDATION (7)

"*All local education authorities should draw the attention of head teachers to the need to keep their ideas up to date on the choice of books in a mixed society*".

The choice of books for use in schools is, as the Recommendation implies, a matter for the judgment of local education authorities and the governors or managers and heads of schools. A number of bodies, both national and local, produce reading lists for the guidance of teachers.

RECOMMENDATION (8)

"*Her Majesty's Inspectorate, the Schools Council and teachers should seek every opportunity within the curricula for broadening horizons, for giving this half of the world more chance to discover how the other half lives. This should be reflected in the content of examinations and in greater use of the multi-racial Commonwealth as a new dimension in the study of many subjects in the curricula*".

The Government accept that it is essential for children and young people to learn about the backgrounds of their future fellow citizens and, on a wider canvas, to be made aware of the conditions of life in countries other than their own. In practice the teachers have to decide within the context of an overcrowded curriculum how much time they can devote to these needs, and the best methods of meeting them. General Studies Courses in schools and further education establishments often include learning about such subjects. The work of some agencies which advise teachers on this aspect of the curriculum has been described in paragraph 9 above. In the ordinary course of its work of advising local education authorities and teachers, and through its short course programme, Her Majesty's Inspectorate helps to identify good practice and to encourage development in this area of work. The Commonwealth Institute and the Royal Commonwealth Society organise courses and conferences, and provide materials and information for teachers on many aspects of the Commonwealth. Local authorities also include material about the Commonwealth in their in-service training courses for teachers and in displays at teachers' centres.

External examinations for the GCE and CSE cover only the final stages of schooling and, at any rate before the school leaving age was raised, about 40% of school leavers did not attempt them. The GCE and CSE Boards, as independent bodies, are responsible for setting their own syllabuses; the Schools Council's supervisory powers are limited to the approval of new syllabuses proposed by the GCE Boards at Advanced Level. However, the teachers are strongly represented on all the examining boards and the boards have always shown a flexibility of approach to changes of emphasis in the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION (9)

"*Students at colleges of education should be made aware that, wherever they teach, they will be doing so in a multi-cultural society. This should be reflected not so much in special courses, but throughout the training, more particularly in such aspects of it as the sociology of education.*"

RECOMMENDATION (10)

"*Specialist courses in race and community relations should be considered by colleges of education in immigrant areas*".

RECOMMENDATION (11)

"*Local education authorities, with the co-operation of university departments, polytechnics, colleges of education and other suitable bodies, should expand in-service courses of special training for teachers in schools with pupils of different cultures. They should also introduce or strengthen, perhaps by visiting groups, specialist training of teachers in such schools. The advice and help of DES should be sought*".

RECOMMENDATION (12)

"*The DES should make a close study of the problem of shortage of teachers able to teach English as a second language and of people to train them*".

RECOMMENDATION (13)

"*The DES should seek finance to ensure that the level of visits and exchanges of teachers and others overseas does not drop and preferably increases. They*

should also ensure that the experience of those who go overseas should be as widely spread through the educational system as possible".

The Government are in general agreement with the Select Committee's recommendations in the field of teacher training and in particular with the relative emphasis placed by the Committee on the role of in-service training. Consultations have been initiated with those concerned to establish guide-lines for a programme of progressive expansion of in-service training opportunities for teachers generally. It may be expected that within this programme the pattern of local development will reflect, in both the content and structure of courses (including the balance between school-based and other forms of training), the specific needs of the education service in each area. The Government share the concern of the Committee to ensure that there are sufficient teachers equipped to teach English as a second language and propose to make a careful study of how this may be best achieved. The increased opportunities for in-service training and the improved arrangements which are to be introduced for the induction of new teachers are likely to make a particular contribution in this field.

As far as initial training is concerned, colleges and departments of education (with whom responsibility for the curriculum rests, under the general supervision of their area training organisation) are increasingly alive to the need to introduce their students to an awareness of the multi-cultural society, and where appropriate to provide more specialised courses in race and community relations and associated subjects.

The Government accept that visits and exchanges of teachers and others overseas have a useful, though necessarily limited, role to play, and that it is important that the experience of those who go overseas should be widely disseminated. The Department of Education and Science have funds available to assist exchanges of teachers with developing Commonwealth, as with other, countries. Concerning visits, the Government take the view that it is for local education authorities, as providers of the education service and employers, to determine in the light of their other financial commitments what priority to assign to supporting teachers on future visits or courses overseas. If there is evidence of a demand by authorities for further courses, the Department of Education and Science will be ready to make appropriate arrangements and, as in the past, to meet the central course expenses.

RECOMMENDATION (14)

"*Local education authorities should seek vigorously to increase the provision for nursery education, particularly in areas of deprivation. The Government should, when considering the cost, take into account the implications for race relations*".

The Government accept that nursery education is particularly valuable as a means of reducing the educational and social disadvantages suffered by children from homes which are culturally and economically deprived. The importance of language difficulties as a source of educational handicap is recognised; these difficulties are acute for many immigrant children with non-English-speaking home backgrounds.

The new building programme for the systematic expansion of nursery education begins this year. The allocations to local education authorities have been weighted in favour of areas of social deprivation and will thus be of special benefit to areas in which there are large numbers of immigrant children. Although the initial allocations to local education authorities also reflect the

deprivation which exists in rural areas, the large conurbations will maintain their accelerated start in the expansion of nursey education provision.

The Government take the view that local education authorities are in the best position to assess the needs of their own areas, and their proposals show that they intend to give priority to disadvantaged children. Over half the new places which they proposed to provide in 1974–75 are for areas of special social need, including the inner city areas. The Government are confident that, where appropriate, authorities will continue to have regard for the needs of immigrant pupils, not only in the distribution of new places but also in the range of facilities provided and in the choice of teaching programmes. The Government also recognise that in areas of social disadvantage the proportion of children needing to attend on a full-time basis will be higher than average.

RECOMMENDATION (15)

"*Where local education authorities are satisfied that a voluntary or semi-official body is meeting the need for the education of adult immigrants they should offer advice and (limited) funds to enable the work to continue and expand*".

The Government's general views on the role of adult education in providing for immigrants are set out in paragraph 8 above. This recommendation might best be considered in the light of the Report by the Committee of Enquiry into Adult Education, chaired by Sir Lionel Russell, CBE, "Adult Education: A Plan for Development". A number of the recommendations of that Report, published in March 1973, relate to the education of the adult disadvantaged, amongst whom are those with a limited educational background or with an inadequate command of English, and with the co-ordinating role of local education authorities in the provision of adult education. The Government are not yet able to announce their conclusions on the Russell Committee's Report but, in the meantime, they will draw this recommendation to the attention of local education authorities; and will continue the support already available through Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 and the Urban Programme.

RECOMMENDATION (16)

"*Local education authorities should seek to make links with industry for further education of immigrant employees*".

The Government will draw this Recommendation to the attention of local education authorities. Consultations have begun with selected authorities with a view to establishing a number of units which will provide language training at the employers' establishments on the lines of the Pathway Centre at Ealing, to which reference is made in paragraphs 135–6 of the Committee's Report.

RECOMMENDATION (17)

"*The Home Office should reconsider whether 15 hours a week is long enough to be classified as a full-time course for overseas students, and whether colleges should not be made responsible for notifying them of a student's prolonged absence*".

The Government will consider this recommendation in the context of the immigration control system and will consult appropriate bodies on any change in existing practice which may be contemplated.

RECOMMENDATION (18)

"The DES should look again at the grant regulations to students for further education to see whether potential sources of friction can be eliminated".

Awards to students on further education are of two kinds: mandatory awards for students on first degree and comparable courses who satisfy certain conditions laid down in the Awards (First Degree etc.) Courses Regulations 1971, and awards at the discretion of local education authorities ("discretionary awards") for students not satisfying those conditions or on other kinds of course. The Awards Regulations do not cover the administration of discretionary awards which is a matter for local education authorities.

With regard to mandatory awards the Regulations prescribe for which students local education authorities should accept responsibility. In particular they make clear that the authorities have no duty to make awards to students who have not been resident in the United Kingdom for at least three years before the start of their course, unless their absence abroad has been for one of certain specified reasons. Advice on the making of awards under the Regulations was given to local education authorities in the Department of Education and Science Circular 5/71. The Government will consider when next the Regulations are revised whether it would be possible to simplify them, but the principle of fairness to students in widely varying circumstances must be preserved. Within the framework of the Regulations it is for the local education authority to decide how far it will carry its enquiries into a student's circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION (19)

"If the disproportion of West Indian children in ESN schools and classes in Greater London continues the DES should institute a special inquiry into the reasons for it".

One of the suggestions contained in the Department of Education and Science Circular letter to Chief Education Officers, mentioned in the comment on Recommendation (3) above, was that all local education authorities with a sizeable immigrant child population should make plans to provide by an early date special facilities in ordinary schools to overcome the linguistic and adjustment problems of immigrant children with a level of ability higher than the general run of pupils in special schools for the educationally sub-normal. If the Government have reason to think that the disproportion referred to by the Select Committee is continuing, they will consider asking the local education authorities concerned to report on progress with their plans.

RECOMMENDATION (20)

"Dispersal should now be phased out as soon as possible in those areas where it is still pursued, but where there is a sufficient number of parents who prefer their children to be dispersed arrangements should be made, if practicable, to meet their wishes".

The Government drew attention to some of the disadvantages of dispersing immigrant pupils in "The Education of Immigrants" and the same pamphlet stressed the importance of respecting the wishes of parents in the matter of choice of school. However, the decision whether or not to disperse immigrant pupils has to be taken by the local education authority in the light of their

judgment as to what will best serve the interests of the community as a whole. The local education authorities will, no doubt, bear in mind the Select Committee's Recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION (21)

"*The collection of statistics under the present DES formula should cease forthwith*".

RECOMMENDATION (23)

"*Local education authorities should be required, as a condition of using the Department's resources and services, to report to the DES regularly and fully on the situation in their area and what they are doing about it*".

RECOMMENDATION (24)

"*An immigrant education advisory unit should be set up in the Department of Education and Science*".

The Government's response to these Recommendations is set out in the opening paragraphs of this Reply.

RECOMMENDATION (22)

"*Consideration should be given to the establishment of a central fund to which local education authorities could apply for resources to meet the special educational needs of immigrant children and adults.*"

The Government have given consideration to the case for a central fund for the education of immigrants. The case for a central fund seems to rest on two arguments. The first is that the presence of large immigrant populations places a burden on local authority services (among them, education) which falls more heavily on some local authorities than others because of the uneven pattern of immigrant settlement. The second is that local education authorities will not take initiatives to improve the education of immigrants unless there is an earmarked Department of Education and Science fund on which they can draw to meet the cost. The first of these arguments has been accepted by successive Governments. It is for this reason that they have maintained the provisions of Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 under which local authorities with large numbers of Commonwealth immigrants can obtain Exchequer grants of 75% on the cost of the extra staff whom they have to employ. In the latest year for which figures are available, the Government expenditure from this source on educational staff specifically amounted to £6m. In addition it has been the practice over the years to devote some Urban Programme monies to schemes, including educational schemes, explicitly of benefit to immigrants or for areas where large numbers of them live. It was announced last December that an extra £6m would be added to the Programme to be used exclusively to assist local authorities whose services were under strain because of the high concentrations of immigrants in their areas.

The Government do not believe that the second argument is borne out by experience. The public provision of education is, for the most part, the responsibility of the local education authorities. It is financed like any other local authority service largely through the rates and Rate Support Grant.

It is the job of the local authority to decide how best to use its resources of staff and money to meet the needs of its area. If specific grants for particular aspects of education in which the local authorities have previously enjoyed discretion were to be introduced, the effect might be to reduce the scope of local responsibility. Since the Government believe that such responsibility is essential to the vigour of local government, they would be reluctant to do this, and their policy is to channel special assistance through Section 11 and the Urban Programme (use of the latter is not confined to immigrants) which apply to a wide range of local services, thus giving the authorities the opportunity to set their own priorities.

THE EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE UNIT

Terms of Reference

To serve as a focal point for consideration of matters, at all stages of education, connected with educational disadvantage and the education of immigrants; to influence the allocation of resources in the interests of immigrants and those identified, on the best currently available criteria, as suffering educational disadvantage; to develop in association with the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU)* other relevant criteria to improve this identification; to establish suitable arrangements for promoting good practice by the educational system in its treatment of the disadvantaged and of immigrants.

Tasks

1. To advise the Secretary of State and to keep in touch with other Departments, local authorities, national statutory and voluntary bodies, educational establishments and teachers.

2. To inform itself of the extent and distribution of educational disadvantage and of the methods used (eg by local education authorities) to define its incidence.

3. To appraise educational measures (whether under special programmes or as a component of existing programmes) which have been, and are being taken to assist the deprived (including immigrants), by central government, LEAs and others.

4. To identify (in conjunction with the APU as appropriate) the incidence of successful practice in meeting the needs of all those suffering educational disadvantage.

5. To promote within existing programmes the allocation of resources weighted in the interests of those identified as suffering educational disadvantage, and to administer any special resources available.

6. To encourage experiments and developments likely to help solve any part of the problem.

7. To establish an information centre (independent of the Department of Education and Science) concerned with giving advice on curriculum, teaching methods, etc., and on good practice generally relevant to the education of the disadvantaged and immigrants.

8. To co-ordinate the Department of Education and Science's interests in relevant inter-Departmental activities in the field of social deprivation.

9. To promote such further research as may be necessary.

* For convenience, the terms of reference and tasks of the APU (like the Educational Disadvantage Unit, an integrated part of the Department of Education and Science) are set out in Annex B.

ANNEX B

THE ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE UNIT

Terms of Reference

To promote the development of methods of assessing and monitoring the achievement of children at school, and to seek to identify the incidence of under-achievement.

Tasks

1. To identify and appraise existing instruments and methods of assessment which may be relevant for these purposes.

2. To sponsor the creation of new instruments and techniques for assessment, having due regard to statistical and sampling methods.

3. To promote the conduct of assessments in co-operation with local education authorities and teachers.

4. To identify significant differences of achievement related to the circumstances in which children learn, including the incidence of under-achievement, and to make the findings available to those concerned with resource allocation within the Department, local education authorities and schools.

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